

RAYMUNDO GERMANO

AUSFÜHRLICHER UND UNPARTHEYISCHER BERICHT

EXTENSIVE AND IMPARTIAL REPORT

1703

translation:

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February 21st 2015
revised November 11th 2018

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SOURCE

1703, Arnstadt

<http://www.zvdd.de/dms/load/met/?PPN=PPN617051135>

<http://gdz.sub.uni->

goettingen.de/dms/load/img/?PPN=PPN617051135&IDDOC=503219

TRANSLATION TEXT COVER

Ausführlicher und unpartheyischer
Bericht
Der
von der Engel- und Holländischen
Schiffs-Flotte
Bey und in dem Hafen Vigos auf der Spanischen Küste
erhaltenen Victorie / reichlichen Beute und übr-
gen rühm uñ würdigen Unternehmungen /
Aus denen geheimen und auserlesenen
Correspondenzen mit Fleisz extrahiret und entworffen
von
Raymundo Germano,
verschiedener Fürstl. Höfe Legations-Secretario.
Arnstadt, 1703.

Extensive and impartial
report
of the victory,
rich loot and other
fame and worthy enterprises
gained by the English and Dutch
ships' fleet
at and in the harbour of Vigo at
the Spanish coast.
From the secret and excellent
correspondence
arduously derived and designed
by
Raymundo Germano,
the legate secretary at several
imperial courts.
Arnstadt, 1703.

INTRODUCTION BY THE TRANSLATOR

This manuscript is about the Battle of Vigo, also called the Battle of Rande. It has the Spanish silver fleet as its subject, but one should consider, that there were many of those fleets.

The era of Michiel de Ruijter (died in 1676), who administered a considerable blow to the English fleet in 1667, was already lying in the past for a while. Meanwhile the English and Dutch had made peace, which explains why in the Battle of Vigo they joinedly went along.

The stake in this case was the Spanish silver fleet that had left the harbour of Vera Cruz on June 11th 1702. This fleet arrived in Havanna on July 7th 1702, and from there departed on July 24th 1702 for Europa, needless to say with military support by a French fleet. One arrived on September 23rd in the bay of Vigo in Galicia, Spain. In total we speak here about a merchant fleet under the accompaniment of an armada, 22 Spanish and 34 French ships are involved.

In those days the Dutch and the English looked without success for a bridgehead around Cadiz. That one got informed about the whereabouts of the silver fleet is a matter of coincidence. Namely, after the failed action around Cadiz one already was on the way back, whilst one of the ships, the Pembroke of captain Thomas Hardy, had been delayed at the coast to take in water. Thus the crew of the Pembroke was informed by sources on the shore about the arrival of the silver fleet in Vigo. There the silver fleet had met with a delay in unloading the loot, because the official supervisors, who had to monitor the books and the unloading of the holds, were still else in the country, i.e. in Sevilla en Cadiz.

The English and Dutch fleet, once reunited with Hardy's ship, immediately changed course to Vigo. The Dutch embarked amongst others on the De Zeven Provinciën, the Holland and the Unie. There were quite some high commanding officers, also in the ranks of vice-admiral and admiral. The English were led by admiral George Rooke. The Dutch by admiral Philips van Almonde. The purpose now, was capturing the silver fleet in Vigo, that at the same time might also be put into use as a base station for the future.

The narrow estuary to the bay of Vigo, and therefore the inland, was closed off by the enemy however. Thus a battle on life and death was ignited there. With the Spaniards the admiral Manuel de Velasco was in charge, whereas the French were led by the admiral François marquis de Château-Renault. On both sides the losses were great. On the allied side 200 men perished, but with the French and Spaniards the losses were ten times as big: 2000 troops lost their lives there.

Eventually the war was won by the allies. The French and Spanish fleet was destroyed for the main part, namely except a number of vessels that were confiscated. Of the eighteen warships of the French fifteen were put on fire and six were confiscated. The Spaniards had sixteen ships in the battle. Of those five were taken and eleven destroyed.

All this took place on one day.

The loot was a disappointment, because much of the silver aboard the Spanish fleet has already been taken inland after some delay (as has been mentioned, due to the delayed arrival of the supervisors). Sufficient remained, but the real losers were the international merchants of whom the merchandise was aboard. Even for that era a gigantic treasure of silver and other

“costly commodities” were involved. Financially the Spaniards suffered the least loss, as they only owned a few of the ships.

The manuscript is short, but very flowery written, with many dependent clauses. Many passages lack auxiliary verbs, which with manuscripts from that period often is the case.

The text in the manuscript is undivided. However, for readability I have added indentations.

Ruud Muschter

THE TEXT OF THE MANUSCRIPT

The whole world knows, that the present king in France on the basis of the dominant affliction of ambition that is dominant with him, since the time that as a sovereign he has started governing has always tried to control most of Europe as the most important part of the world. This is proven by the wars that on the advice of his state ministers Richelieu, Mazarins, Colberts, Louvis and others since his adulthood he has waged



up to now with the Spaniards, now with the Italians, now with the English and now again with the Dutch, which with dilligence¹ nowadays pass by, and only want to remind us, how

¹ Partly undecipherable: “welche mit Fleisz [undecipherable] anietzo übergehen”.

in an unreasonable manner he not only in 1678 encroached in the Alsace, in Hünningen, Freiburg and other cities belonging to the Alsace; in 1670 in Philipsburg, the duchy of Cleve, and the city of Lippstadt, in 1681, but also in the city Strasbourg; actually on his part has taken away the key to the Roman Empire; but also in 1688 has penetrated into the Pfaltz, in Heilbrun, Heidelberg, Mainz, Ebernburg, Philipsburg, Mannheim, Speyer, Worms, Oppenheim, Frankenthal, Trier, Rochheim, Bonn and many more; partly, i.e. mostly, by treachery, partly by cunning, partly taken by inhuman tyranny, through which admittedly he achieved, that from his peers he obtained the name of the Great and many other flattering things, but could not prevent, that through divine guidance and the fate, as also through brave compilation of the joined allies his title up to now has slightly deteriorated, from now on will ever get more lost, and finally may become totally obsolete.

It is especially remarkable, that - as God has almost the greatest and most illustrious potentates and sovereigns toppled through female persons, of which queen Elizabeth in England is an example, who needed the greatest monarch Philip for counsel and has not been forgotten - it seems, as if God took the prudent, heroic and glorious queen in England to make use of her as a special instrument to mislead² the great Ludovic³, and through that punish him to merit. Now, admittedly the French fortunate sun has had to stand rather still up to now in his course in Italy, and one has been able to observe his relative eclipse at the Rhine and the Meuse, but no more visible eclipse of this French sun could up to now more precisely and more clearly have been perceived than in the waters and ports of Vigo.

² “in die Schule zu führen”. Translation uncertain.

³ Possibly the Scott Schot Ludovic Grant, 1696-1758, IIe duke of Lennox.

Recently the French already took the Enterprise of the allies on the Spanish town and harbour of Cadiz for being just a black cloud, which quickly dispersed again, and through which the French sun the more fiercely wants to penetrate. But, just like the announcement of an orderly solar eclipse after thorough calculation of nature and the course of the heavens is só definite and certain that necessarily it has to take place at the indicated time and hour, thus also the divine providence and the accompanying revenge seemed to have become irresistibly fatal.

For, at a given moment, the allied fleet was really on its way back to the harbour, yes, moreover, already more than a day's travel distant from Vigo. In addition, had not a ship that had been drifted off from the fleet, accidentally come to Lugo, then the whole fleet had not been informed about the silver galleons, and before it would have sailed back from England all the silver would have been unpacked and taken deeper inland, or - which is more probable - after received instruction it would have been brought to French harbours by Chateaurenaut⁴. Even stronger, had not the consul in Lugo shocked the English⁵ with the fortunately brought in silver and the failed undertaking of beleaguering Cadiz, then he as well would have left, and no-one would have learned that the ships had returned to Vigo.

As meanwhile this had become revealed; this captain had rapidly sailed after the fleet; the return had been announced; and the English and Dutch admiral immediately after the organized martial court together with the duke of O.mont had taken the brave decision to turn back *linea recta*, attack him and with that exert the utmost, then through this can and must an eclipse of the French sun come into being. With this it is remarkable, that

⁴ Read: François marquis de Château-Renault, 1637-1716. He had to protect Spanish ships that came from America with treasures.

⁵ "der Consul (...) dem Engelländer (...)" Unclear c.q. incorrect 'dem'. Translation uncertain.

the admiral Chateaurenaut, who then at once had ravishingly spliced the mainbrace for the Spaniards⁶, and with them had enjoyed the fortunate transposing of the galleons, had taken the enemy fleet to be French supplies ships, and therefore had let them come nearer so close that hardly they had had any time left to flee away. Furthermore it is remarkable, that it⁷ had quickly sailed the winded up chains to pieces; but even more, that it had not only quickly found a spot to expediently land the army, but also that the Spaniards and French fled away from them, and so to speak had left everything to the judgement of the allies, all which has come about in the following manner, and somewhat more precisely formulated that is.

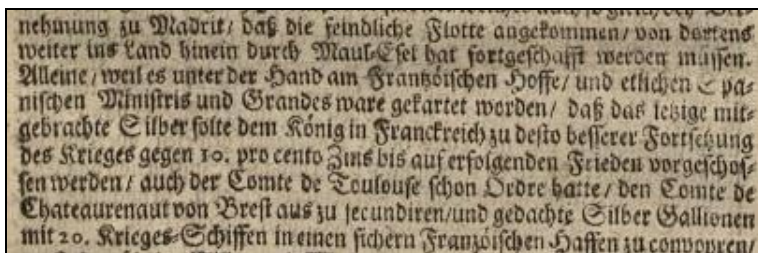
Namely after the Spanish silver fleet from the West-Indies consisting of nineteen warships with cargo, accompanied by twenty-three warships of Chateaurenaut - who, about which one later got information, had carried with him about 75.000.000 franks in minted silver and bullion as well as 30.000.000 in costly merchandise -, had arrived at, and entered the harbour of Vigo on October 20th, thereupon out of worry that the allies were still before Cadiz, who up to now had had a constant watchful eye on this fleet, one and other, and - as one was assured from London recently - almost the tenth part of the carried silver, especially that which belonged to the king of Spain, was unloaded and carried inland partly to Compostella, partly to Lugo (situated some 25 miles from Vigo) and brought into safety, which also at once, when in Madrid one learned that the enemy fleet had arrived, from there by means of mules should have been carried further inland.

However, as meanwhile it had been brought up with the French court and several Spanish ministers and Grandes, that the now

⁶ Psychologically clever, as it was very questionable whether the Spaniards would settle with a French commander.

⁷ The fleet.

carried silver should be lent to the king in France against ten percent rent, in case of a resulting peace, for the even better continuation of the war, and also the earl of Toulouse already had the order to assist the earl of Chateaurenaut from Brest and



to convoy the mentioned silver galleons with twenty warships to a safe French haven, all the resting silver and the merchandise had to remain lying in the ships, until at the first message that the English and Dutch fleet was out of the Spanish sea and on the way back to England, they could be transferred to France.

In such a forgoing the ships stood now in the harbour, awaiting the first good message about the return of the enemy fleet. The allies who, as has already been touched on above, after having arrived at Cadiz had seized Porto S. Maria, had plundered it and marauded it and had looted about 100,000 pound sterling⁸; had fired upon Fort Matagorda; had demolished Fort Catharina; and after having taken in the great loot had again embarked their ships and had again sailed away westward from Cadiz at October 1st, obtained thanks to the ship of monsieur Hardy, named Bembrock - that had been to Lugo, there to take in fresh water - one mile at this side of Vigo at the return to England the message, that the Spanish silver galleons had arrived at Vigo, reason why immediately the Admiralty had held a court martial,

⁸ Silver.

in which unanimously the decision was made to go there to try, regardless whether the silver had been unloaded or not, to ruin them, not knowing that also the knight Cloudesly Schovel⁹ had already received the order to go there with a squadron of sixteen warships from London, which in fact afterwards, although after the performing of exploits, had encountered them.

Now, hereupon the straight course of the combined fleet went under favourable wind to Vigo, arrived on October 22nd¹⁰ under the favour of a heavy fog and gloomy weather at Vigo, and the harbour came closer and closer. First the Spaniards and the admiral Chateaurenaut himself surmised, that they were French provision and convoy ships to pick them up in France, and they let them approach so far, until they could reach them with the cannons and try to keep them off, under constant firing them, from entering the harbour, upon which however they turned only slightly, but arduously tried to accomplish their purpose.

This was the situation¹¹ with the allies regardless all the applied, possible precaution. And as not only the chains at the shore of the sea were winded up, but also a very arduous working and ramping on the port works had been done, also by the viceroy to its defence many farmers had been mobilised, and the fort with many troops had been occupied in advance, yes, regardless all rigorous resistance, the duke of Rodondillo advanced up to six miles above Vigo, where on the one side he could cover a fort, but on the other one an erected redoubt that had been covered on both sides with many pieces of artillery, and the river; but before him, and crossing the river, found a number of applied ships masts, between which big chains and ships ropes had been drawn, over which big ships barrels were laid all over.

⁹ Read: the admiral Sir Cloudesly Shovell, 1650-1707.

¹⁰ Two times mentioned therefore. 1702.

¹¹ "Gestalt denn". Translation uncertain.

Hereupon the attack took place with the lighter ships, because one was not assured of the depth of the beach. With the attack now, all the admirals and captains at sea, except for the admiral Allemonde, who right away did not feel well, were present and did their part at their utmost ability, and in this way. In the morning of October 23rd 2000 men were debarked without any significant resistance, and with this detachment one went straight to the fort that was described above and covered the estuary of the river, between which fort and the mountains laying around it, 8000 men of enemy infantry were positioned, who however were at once attacked by the English and Dutch and after a light skirmish expelled, whilst the batteries of the mentioned fort were conquered from both sides, with which action the allies were so fortunate not to lose more than 30 men.

Meanwhile about 300 French and 80 Spaniards had withdrawn from the batteries into the fort, and fired some time bravely on those of us. However, as they also tried to make a sortie on them, it happened, that they not only were backed, but also, that the grenadiers attached to the last ones and right away with them penetrated the fort, and as well - at once backed up by ours - completely usurped the fort.

Now, as on land there was fighting against the French and the Spaniards in a manner very worthy of praise, neither did one celebrate on the water, but after retrieving the anchors one advanced under continuous fire of the enemies, with the ships against the above mentioned palisade over the river, where the vice-admiral Hobsont with his ship¹² named 'le Torbais'¹³ was

¹² "mit seinen Schiffe". However there is only one ship involved here. It does not fall under the well-know row of 15 French line ships, therefore it must have been one of the other ones.

¹³ So it seems to be a Frenchman with a French ship. It concerns however the English vice-admiral Thomas Hopsonn, with his ship Torbay.

so fortunate as to suddenly breaking through. Now the remaining ones who followed in the line should have imitated and supported him, but those found this to be so impossible, that they were compelled with great difficulty first to hew everything down, and only then open the passage before them, whilst in the mean time the ship of Hobsont taking action against the enemy, was fired up by it with a burner¹⁴, which fire nonetheless was extinguished again.¹⁵

Now, as soon as those of us with the ships had passed by the palisade and were in the estuary of the harbour, the enemy either started setting fire to its own ships¹⁶, or draw them firmly ashore, or run them into the ground. Through this however they could not¹⁷ prevent six warships and nine galleons from falling into the hands of the allies. Which fortunate infringement furthermore had as a result, that of fourty-three ships (the specification and the encountered accident of which we furtheron indicate and want to add separately) all in all not one was saved, and that all the silver present on them, and the costly merchandise - among which alone, would have been 24.000 aroli's¹⁸ or, as others indicate, 200.000 pound Sterling in cochenille¹⁹ - have either fallen into the chasm of the sea, or into enemy hands.

Next, from them approximately 300 officers, amongst whom the admiral monsieur d'Alligre and the marquis d'Galesonniere

¹⁴ With this 53 men perished.

¹⁵ As a result of the enemy ship laying alongside exploding, the fire was partly extinguished, probably through spraying water of the explosion.

¹⁶ On the order of Château-Renault.

¹⁷ In the manuscript two negations ("nicht") are used, but in old-German this often has the single meaning.

¹⁸ Meaning uncertain.

¹⁹ Possibly a dye.

and moreover 1500 troops and ship's servants had been captured; 1700 tons of gunpowder been blown skyhigh; 100 metal cannons of the batteries and ships, en miscellaneous silver, namely about 750.000 Rthr.²⁰ of silver plates and many a thousand pieces of piastres again been recovered from the water, and been taken to England en Holland; has also the town of Vigo been conquered; and has in it an excellent loot been achieved. Also the king in Portugal who, at that message, had declared himself pro the allies, wants to have 20.000 footmen²¹ and 4000 on horseback march to the Spanish front. No less also the parlement, which in that time at once convened, granted great sums of money for further countering of that war.



Engelland und Holland genommen worden/ die Stadt Vigos gleichfalls erobert und treffliche Beute darinn gemacht worden. Auch will nunmehr der König in Portugall auf solche Nachricht sich vor die Allirten erklärt/ 20.000. M. zu Fuß und 4000. zu Pferde an die Spanis. Frontieren anmarschiren lassen/ nicht weniger hat auch das Parlament/ so damahls gleich bey sammen ware/ grosse Geld Summen zu fernerer Bestreitung solches Krieges gewilliget. Die eroberten Schiffe sind so wohl von den Englischen Admiral Rooke und Schovel glücklich in Doure u. Spithead als auch von dem Holländischen Admiral Allemonde in Holland eingebracht worden/ und nichts als eine Gallione verlohren gegangen/ die im Auslauffen auf eine Klippe gerückert/ und in Stücken zerstoßen worden; dagegen der Admiral Schovel 1. Gallionen wieder aus

The conquered ships have been brought both by the English admiral Rook²² and Schovel²³ fortunately into Doure²⁴ and Spithead²⁵, as well as by the Dutch admiral Allemonde into in

²⁰ Presumably is meant: 'Reichsthaler'.

²¹ "M."

²² Also written as 'Rooke'.

²³ Read: "admirals", because Shovell as well was, after earlier promotions to ranks of an admiral, he was since 1702 an admiral 'of the white', one rank under that of fleet admiral.

²⁴ This will be the present Dover, named after the river Dour.

²⁵ This will be the present Spithead, an estuary in the south of England, so ideal for a sortie.

Holland, and nothing but a galleon had been lost, that in driving off had been smashed into a cliff and been torn apart. Nonetheless the admiral Schovel has raised again two galleons from the ground, in which was found a great value that he took home with him.

Because of this great victory one has in Londen, Oxford and other places of the kingdom displayed uncommon signs of joy, and celebrated a solemn thanks party with such an attention in the St.-Paul's church - which is the main church -, as one had hardly ever heard, with which the *Te Deum Laudamus* was sung amidst the firing of the artillery pieces, and moreover the queen has received the good luck wishes of all the great ones of the empire. Yes, the emperor has had the English ambassador congratulated about this victory, which had never been done before; and his imperial majesty has also had a solemn thanks party held in the residence in Vienna on November 30th in the cathedral, and the *Te Deum Laudamus* sung under great festivity and threefold firing of the artillery pieces.

Meanwhile in Madrid, actually on the day that one intoned the triumph song and the *Te Deum Laudamus* in the church della *Donne monstra*²⁶ d'Atota, regarding the sixteen standards and two banners that had been conquered from the Germans²⁷ at

²⁶ Possibly "mostra".

²⁷ The manuscript contains a remarkable printer's error. Next to each other there are two lines of which the second to last word is "von". The one line ends with "von In", and the other one with "von den". These two groups of words have been disarrayed. Through this it accidentally says: "von In-Teutschen", and "von den dien überreichte", which therefore should be: "von den Teutschen", and "von Indien überreichte".

Friedlingen²⁸ - which the queen herself accepted with her own hand and handed over to the patriarch of the Indies, who laid them on the altar, to be hung thereafter -, the sad notification had arrived from Vigo that the entire fleet had been ruined and burned there.

No less remarkable is it, that - as at the French court of the count of Chateaurenaut one had done one's best to glorify the displayed bravura and good fortune with saving this silver fleet, and therefore in Milan²⁹ the *Te Deum Laudamus* had been sung and big bonfires had been lit - exactly at that time and even on the same day that these festivities were celebrated, the fleet mentioned had been fully ablaze in Vigo. Now, as the Dutch and English this year had confiscated more than 114 Terraneuf-riders³⁰ and even yet more than 200 ships; the admiral Bem-bou³¹ has captured Hispaniola³² or St.-Domingo, Petit Gvava³³, Gardeloupe³⁴ and most of the French plantcities³⁵; and is about to beleaguer the Spaniards from Porto Bello, Cartagena and Vera Cruz, through which it may happen, that hereafter no silver and other merchandise can be transported to Spain; and in the future years the Dutch want to produce strong sea and land forces; it is beyond doubt that in the coming era with divine assistance we have to expect more French solar eclipses.

²⁸ The Battle of Friedlingen, in 1702. It concerns the beginning phase of the War of the Spanish Throne, 1702-1714, which ignited after the death of the Habsburgian Charles II, king of Spain.

²⁹ Earlier however the manuscript puts, that the festivities in Milan had to do with the conquered decorations at Friedlingen.

³⁰ Unclear who are meant with this.

³¹ Read: John Benbow, 1653-1702, English naval officer.

³² Christened by Columbus 'La Isla Española'. Is Haïti.

³³ Read: "Petit Goave", in Haïti.

³⁴ Read: "Santa Maria de Guadalupe", thus named by Columbus.

³⁵ Read: 'colonies', cities therefore to which another population has been 'transplanted'.

List of the French and Spanish ships conquered and ruined at Vigo.

Names of the ships *	Number of the cannons that they have carried
Le Fort	76 burned
Le Prompt	76 confiscated
L 'Assuré	66 confiscated
L'Espérance	70 confiscated and sunk
Le Boubou ³⁶	68 confiscated by the Dutch
La Sirène	60 confiscated and sunk
Le Solide	56 burned
Le Ferme	72 confiscated
Le Prudent	62 burned
Le Modéré	56 confiscated
Le Superbe	70 confiscated and sunk
La Dauphine	46 burned
La Volontaire	46 confiscated and sunk
Le Triton	42 confiscated
L'Enflamme	64 burned
L'Entreprenaut	22 burned
Le Favori	8 burned
La Choquante	8 burned
3 corvettes	burned
17 caravettes	burned
4 galleons	confiscated by the English
2 galleons	sunk
5 galleons	confiscated by the Dutch

* The manuscript states them without accents. In the second column is also added the fate of the ships. The Oriflamme, with 64 cannons and burned, lacks.

³⁶ Read: 'Le Bourbon'.

